

prodigy

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS PRODIGY?

INTRODUCTION

MISSION

Prodigy is a non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging creativity and innovation in teenagers, as well as teaching financial responsibility. It is a space for young people ages 13-18 to be listened to and taken seriously. We work with young adults who have innovative ideas that they are not able to execute on their own. As long as the idea fits into our guidelines, the student will be paired with a mentor who guides them through the production process, so they can learn first-hand how products and organizations are created. Prodigy also offers workshops to these students and the community that teach financial responsibility, as a way to educate people even further.

WHY?

Young people often have great ideas, but little knowledge as to how to get those ideas off of the ground. Giving teenagers the chance not only to see how companies function, but to actually work with the companies themselves gives them valuable work experience, builds their confidence and leadership skills, and gives them a leg up on the competition when it comes to employment.

And while many students also work part-time jobs while attending class, few know how to manage their money responsibly. "Financial literacy is amongst the most imperative competencies required to survive in today's economy" (Williams), yet many people are lacking in financial skills. Prodigy offers free financial literacy workshops to Prodigy 'students' and the surrounding community. Although our focus is on high school students, we want to extend education to the rest of the community as well.

STRATEGY - STUDENTS

Prodigy wouldn't exist without brilliant young minds. We target high-school age kids who are creative and eager, but who don't necessarily have the resources to achieve their goals. Prodigy tries to meet these kids where they already are—Prodigy buildings, resources, and advertisements are set up around schools, malls, bus stops, and fast food restaurants. The primary means of capturing these potential students' attention is through brightly colored flyers and advertisements, as well as a dynamic and engaging website that is easy to navigate. Those who have already been through the program are also given promotional t-shirts as another way of spreading awareness, and these t-shirts may also be sold or given away during Prodigy's financial literacy classes.

The advertisements, in particular, appeal to the two different types of students Prodigy most attempts to connect with: those who don't feel heard or respected by the adults in their life, and those who have goals and ambitions, but who don't have the resources or know-how to achieve them. These two groups of teenagers and what their motivations are, are discussed more in depth later in this document.

WHY?

Being mostly teenagers, those who go through Prodigy's program don't often have the time or money to invest in themselves, and it is likely that they don't have many people around them who are able to help them out. Prodigy's ultimate goal is to help those who have the drive and passion, but lack resources, so Prodigy tries to all but put those resources into the hands of potential students. Meeting teenagers where they already are helps to guide them through what can be a taxing process.

INTRODUCTION

STRATEGY - POTENTIAL AND CURRENT SUPPORTERS

Because Prodigy is a nonprofit organization, we need as much involvement from the community as possible in order to fulfill our mission. Investors and donors give to Prodigy monetarily, experts and suppliers donate their resources and skills, and mentors and advisors donate their time and knowledge. We reach out personally to individuals and companies to establish a more personal connection, and give them more detailed information on how Prodigy works before they decide if they want to get involved. Once a part of the Prodigy team, these groups of people help us to reach our goals, and we thank them in return for their resources and donations by promoting their companies and giving back to them by improving and strengthening the community.

WHY?

Not only does Prodigy have to appeal to teenagers, it has to reach out to investors, experts, and people who will act as mentors as well. Rallying high school students will be the 'easy' part. Without donations and expertise, Prodigy would never even get off the ground. Reaching out to each member (or potential member) of Prodigy personally creates a strong community and helps keep the company running smoothly.

IDENTITY

WE LOOK GOOD IN RED

IDENTITY

IDENTITY OVERVIEW

Prodigy's overall tone is bold and confident, as well as approachable and professional. The designs and graphics used are simple, but have a hand-rendered feel to them as well. In order to appeal to several different audiences, Prodigy's branding is a balance of modern trends and simple, timeless elements.



IDENTITY

LOGO

prodigy

VARIATIONS

prodigy

prodigy

LOGO - WHY?

Prodigy was chosen as the name for the organization because it hits all the right notes. It encourages the community to be confident in the brand and the students participating, which in turn assures companies and investors that this organization is worth investing in. Prodigy works on the student level as well. The definition of the word prodigy is “a person, especially a child or young person, having extraordinary talent or ability”. It allows students to be proud of their abilities and knowledge without feeling ‘uncool’ or ‘geeky’, as high schoolers might experience.

The Prodigy logo was hand drawn and then cleaned up in Illustrator. Again, this is to appeal to several different audiences. To the students, the hand drawn element appears approachable and modern, while to the community and companies, the clean lines give off a more professional vibe.

The descender of the ‘p’ and the mark over the ‘i’ were hand drawn, scanned in, and then largely left alone. These two ‘rougher’ parts of the logo are meant to represent the students—they have great intentions but are a bit rough around the edges. The cleaner lines, on the other hand, show the adult audiences that Prodigy is an organization to be taken seriously.

IDENTITY

ICONOGRAPHY



ICONOGRAPHY - WHY?

Graphic elements are used alongside Prodigy's logo to help communicate our mission. The icons are cleanly drawn and fit perfectly into Prodigy's bold color scheme. Each icon corresponds with each step a student takes while they are involved with Prodigy. A traditional light bulb to represent the initial idea. A standard-looking office building to represent Prodigy's office. The speech bubble with the exclamation marks represents the student explaining their idea and their point of view, while the double speech bubbles represent the conversation between the student and the advisory board. The two figures standing together represent a student getting paired with a mentor, and the footsteps represent goal setting and creating a timeline. The wrench represents the production of a product as well as the tweaking of the initial idea. Finally, the second light bulb (a cfl bulb) represents the completion of the student's project and the new knowledge they have gained from the process.

TYPOGRAPHY

DIN
Aa Bb Cc 0 1 2 3

DIN Regular
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890 ,!?!&()

DIN Light
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890 ,!?!&()

DIN Medium
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890 ,!?!&()

TYPOGRAPHY - WHY?

Handwriting is an important element of Prodigy's branding. The hand lettering comes off as friendly and approachable and also has the 'do-it-yourself' aspect, which is a key part of the Prodigy program. Trying to stick solely with a premade font can be very limiting, which is exactly the opposite of what Prodigy is trying to do. Hand written typography gives the freedom to think outside the box and create something unique.

DIN is used as a supporting typeface to ground the hand lettering and to make sure it doesn't slip into 'juvenile'. Handwriting can give off a sloppy or informal feel if done incorrectly, so having a more structured font helps the brand be taken seriously by investors and professionals. DIN also originated as a handwritten font in the early 20th century, which makes it perfect for pairing with hand lettered elements.

COLOR PALETTE



BRIGHT RED

Pantone 032 C

C = 0 R = 237

M = 100 G = 27

Y = 90 B = 47

K = 0

Hex #ED1B2F



BASIC BLACK

Pantone Process Black

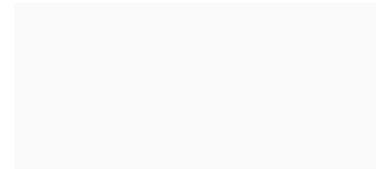
C = 100 R = 0

M = 100 G = 0

Y = 100 B = 0

K = 100

Hex #000000



OFF WHITE

Pantone P 179-1 U

C = 0 R = 245

M = 0 G = 245

Y = 0 B = 241

K = 2

Hex #F5F5F1

COLOR PALETTE - WHY?

Prodigy's color palette is bold and bright, but simple. A bright, medium red is the brand's main standout color. According to basic color theory, saturated warm colors like Prodigy's bright red generally invoke feelings of passion and energy. A pure red can be overwhelming, so Prodigy uses a red that is bright and leans very slightly towards orange. Prodigy's basic concept is for students to become excited and proud of what they can accomplish, and a poppy red encourages those feelings. The red is paired with black and white. These neutrals are easy to read and compliment the red as opposed to competing with it.

TARGET AUDIENCE

NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED

TARGET AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE OVERVIEW

Prodigy's target audience is high school age (13-18) teenagers who are creative, driven, independent thinkers. These people often struggle with feeling ignored, not taken seriously due to their age and lack of experience, or not having the time or money to pursue their goals. Many of Prodigy's students are financially disadvantaged and may have difficult family lives. Despite teenage stereotypes of laziness and entitlement, Prodigy believes that everyone has something to contribute to the world, no matter their circumstances.

WHY?

As stated above, there are many negative stereotypes that accompany being a teenager. Thought to be shallow, immature, and directionless, most adults don't take them seriously and, to inadvertently drive these stereotypes, adults find it "simple to dismiss youth as immature and uninterested when teens do not respond to adults' demands" (Miklosi 41). In order to uplift students and attempt to reverse these preconceived notions, Prodigy employs factors very similar (if not identical) to Joe Milkosi's factors for increasing civic engagement in teenagers. These factors are as follows: "better listening skills [for adults], true respect for youth, and creating meaningful leadership and power sharing opportunities with them [the youth]" (Mikosi).

Prodigy appeals to its teenage audience in two overarching ways, in this document referred to as "Be Loud" and "Be Proud". "Be Loud" focuses on the first two of Miklosi's factors: allowing teenagers to be heard and their ideas respected by adults, and "Be Proud" focuses on the third factor, which proposes putting the youth at the helm of their own projects but giving them mentors "who understand the difference between being too authoritative and too aloof" (Miklosi) and who can give them the guidance and connections they need. These two lenses go over more in depth why a young person would want to become a part of Prodigy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

STUDENTS - LANGUAGE USED

It feels like nobody is willing to listen. “You’re too young.” “You’ll never be able to do that.” “You don’t know anything.” You know these people are wrong, but you still feel trapped, like there’s nothing you can do about it. You’re overworked and underpaid and it seems like it’s going to stay that way.

Not quite. We know you have something important to say, and Prodigy wants to not only hear you say it, but give you the opportunity to achieve your goals, no matter how unattainable they seem right now.

We look for people ages 13 through 18 who are independent thinkers with new ideas. Anything from inventions, new ways of looking at things, or a different solution to an old problem. We want to hear what you have to say, and then we’ll give you the means to follow through. After you give a quick presentation, we’ll talk with you about how you can turn your ideas into reality. We’ll pair you with a mentor in the field you’re interested in, then they’ll hand you the reins. You’ll have almost full control over your own project, but you’ll have some guidance if you need it.

When everything’s all said and done, you’ll have real-life work experience, new connections, and a solid network of people who know what you’re capable of.

You don’t have to wait until you’re older for people to take you seriously. Come to our building or fill out a short form on our website www.prodigy.com/innovatorform and start showing people what you can do.

TARGET AUDIENCE

WHY?

The language here has two different jobs: to make potential Prodigy prospects feel like their situation is understood, and to give them a spark of hope. The first paragraph spouts out things they have likely heard before. They will be able to empathize and recall those feelings of annoyance, exhaustion, and perhaps even hopelessness, which allows them to connect to the ads they see on a personal level.

Once they're drawn in initially, the second paragraph plants the idea that they are able to change their situation, and change it for the better. The rest of the content lays out a condensed version of the process that they will go through if they participate in Prodigy.

Teenagers can be very mistrustful of ads, and are often acutely aware of when they're being 'sold' to, or when a company is being not quite truthful. Therefore, giving them all the information, even if it isn't dressed up or glitzy, is a much better way to appeal to this audience. The copy used is also quick and straight to the point, so the potential teenagers reading the ad don't become bored by the end (if they even make it there).

STUDENTS - BE LOUD

Prodigy's entire premise is built around listening to and respecting teenagers' ideas and opinions. The very first step in the process is a group of adults listening to a young person present their idea (barring any ideas that actively promote violence or abuse), no matter how outlandish or impossible or inconsequential it might be. As has been stated previously, teenagers want to feel they're being heard and being taken seriously. In his piece about engaging teenagers in civic discussions, Joe Miklosi writes that during a focus group, "students...shared multiple stories about how their viewpoints were not taken seriously by adult figures...and how adults such as teachers did not genuinely listen to them. A couple of the...students even commented that teachers told them they would not amount to anything in life" (Miklosi 40). Teenagers have a lot of potential, but if all they hear is that they're not good enough, or that they will not succeed, they may begin to feel that what these people are saying is true.

There are many youth programs that ask for the opinions of teens, but "rarely do they have much impact on program, practice, or policy" despite the fact that it has become "conventional wisdom that effective quality youth programs include listening to and including the ideas and opinions of young people in program planning and implementation" (Roholt 95, 81). Having a place where teenagers are genuinely listened to and taken seriously is what Prodigy prides itself on, and it is also a very compelling reason for youth to want to be involved.

Referencing Joe Miklosi's focus groups again, he writes that when asked about their favorite teachers and what makes a good teacher, "the major attribute that nearly all of the students emphasized was respect" (Miklosi 41). All of the teachers the students liked were of different backgrounds and fields, and also had different teaching styles, but because they had "the ability to listen to the students, treat them like adults, and show a genuine interest in their lives outside of school", the students "opened up, became more engaged in classroom discussion, and developed skill sets that [would] allow them to develop into civic-minded individuals" (Miklosi 41). Prodigy wants to embody the same traits as those well-liked teachers and create a safe space for youth, as well as a network of people who make teenagers feel listened to and respected.

TARGET AUDIENCE - RESEARCH

STUDENTS - BE PROUD

Almost everyone wants to prove their worth, in one way or another, and this is especially prevalent in teenagers. Another reason a young person would want to be a part of Prodigy is to feel accomplished and empowered. With high school as their primary measure of how well a person is doing, teenagers who don't perform well in high school feel second-rate or stuck. Even worse is that many high school curriculums as "experienced by many youth [are] shallow and aimless" (Halpern XIII), which give them even less of a chance to succeed. Prodigy appeals to these teenagers by allowing them to take charge of their own experience and work education.

Participants in Prodigy don't just 'help out'—they take the primary leadership role. They take responsibility for the successes, as well as the failures.

Programs with apprentice-like structures allow teenagers to gain skills and experience that they might not during a typical high school experience. Participants in the After School Matters program, for example, were able to "think more flexibly and approach tasks more carefully. They learn that problems or difficulties in a project are not a sign to quit but something to work through" (Halpern). High school, on the other hand, oftentimes only serves in preparing students for college, even if college is not a viable option for them. Programs like Prodigy or After School Matters, that implement an apprenticeship-like approach, are able to foster important skills such as determination, cooperation, and how to behave in a work environment. These abilities cannot always be taught in the classroom, but they are vital to a teenager's eventual success in the workplace and beyond.

Prodigy gives teenagers the opportunity to challenge themselves and be in charge of their own futures. The program allows them to feel proud of something they accomplished and prove their abilities.

SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE

HELPING TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE OVERVIEW

Although the organization is aimed at high school students, Prodigy has another audience ‘behind the scenes’—the investors, experts, and mentors who help to keep the organization funded and running smoothly.

WHY?

Although it would be nice, programs like Prodigy can’t rely solely on volunteers and kind souls. We need additional resources as well as funding to finance the students’ projects as well as pay full-time employees. The people Prodigy reaches out to include both individuals and companies.

Each of the three audiences (investors and donators, experts and suppliers, and mentors and advisors) is appealed to differently because even “readers who do share a common reading ability do not always read messages in the same manner” (Bush). Everyone has a different habitus. An individual looking to mentor a student and a company offering to donate money, for example, will both have different reasons for wanting to be involved in Prodigy.

There are two lenses that were researched for each audience—‘Give Something’ and ‘Get Something’—because members of the same audience have different motivations behind their actions as well. Some will be more responsive towards altruistic language, while others respond more favorably to receiving some kind of compensation. Paying attention to what the audiences will respond to is important because the more people Prodigy can appeal to, the easier it will be to accomplish our mission.

SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE

INVESTORS & DONORS - LANGUAGE USED

Prodigy strives to be an organization dedicated to encouraging and educating young adults, but we can't do it alone! Prodigy does not receive any public financial support, so we rely on people like you to help us achieve our goals.

You can choose to either donate to us directly, or support a specific student's project. If you make a donation to an individual's project you will receive a gift relevant to that project, i.e., a functioning product, a ticket to a movie screening, or a completed novel. Those who donate directly will be recognized and will receive a 'thank you' gift.

Supporting our organization and our students is just one benefit to donating to Prodigy; your donations can benefit you as well! Because we are an educational nonprofit organization, you may want to take advantage of the charitable giving tax deduction.

We are grateful for your support and thank you for considering to donate to us.

WHY?

The investors and donors of Prodigy are comprised of both individuals and other organizations. Their contributions to Prodigy are solely monetary, which help pay employee salaries, company expenses, and, of course, fund projects. Generally, Prodigy encourages investors to donate directly to the organization in order to best utilize donations, but investors are also able to sponsor an individual student's project if they want their donation to feel more personal.

INVESTORS & DONORS - GIVE SOMETHING

The reason most people donate to organizations is to see their community benefit. Prodigy has many opportunities for people to get involved in the process, but not everyone has professional experience and not many can commit to being a mentor. Being able to donate directly to Prodigy allows anyone to get involved, even if they have limited time or skills.

The number one reason for making charitable donations was “pragmatic considerations of personal and community benefits” (Prince), and part of Prodigy’s mission statement includes educating the community. Donors and investors can feel satisfied with their donations because “the most obvious benefit from giving is the output produced by the relevant nonprofit organization” (Vesterlund), i.e., the professional experience and increased self confidence young adults will gain individually (Mijares), as well as the financial knowledge the community can gain as a result of taking the classes that Prodigy offers.

INVESTORS & DONORS - GET SOMETHING

An obvious benefit to donating is getting something tangible in return. A donator who gives money to a specific student’s project will get a product or service relevant to that particular product. Those who give directly to Prodigy will get recognition and a small thank you gift. A study done about affluent Australians “suggests the affluent are generally willing to support community causes to some degree if personally asked and if they perceive the cause is worthwhile” (Madden). Prodigy reaches out to potential donators individually to give them information about the program, then thanks them when they donate to the organization. By doing this, potential investors and donators feel more of a connection to the organization and will be more willing to donate.

As Prodigy is an educational, nonprofit company, it is also an IRS qualified charitable organization. Because of this, contributions to Prodigy can be tax deductible (Beesley). Although it might seem counter-intuitive, financial benefits are a big draw for many donators. In fact, a “study revealed that “awareness of tax advantages” was ranked the third most important motivator for making a charitable donation” (Vesterlund).

SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE

EXPERTS & SUPPLIERS - LANGUAGE USED

We need your expertise and resources to be a successful organization. We want intelligent and personable experts to educate the community and we also need the space to teach in! Experts and suppliers like you help high schoolers and students of all ages engage in education.

We strive to educate the community and create positive experiences for young people, so your donations and expertise will be utilized and appreciated by many. We can use small things like pencils and erasers as well as much larger donations such as classrooms and production spaces. Because Prodigy also offers classes to the community, we look for knowledgeable and personable teachers.

Your skills and donations are very valuable to us, and we want to thank you for them. Participating companies will receive recognition and 'thank you' gifts in return for their services.

We are grateful for your support and thank you for considering to donate to us.

WHY?

The experts and suppliers of Prodigy are made up of companies and professionals. Instead of monetary donations, they offer their workspace (for Prodigy's workshops and student projects) and professional expertise. The professionals of this group help mentors in guiding the student participants through their project as well as teach the classes that Prodigy offers to the community. Donations of workspace are used for hosting classes and educating students about production processes.

EXPERTS & SUPPLIERS - GIVE SOMETHING

While appealing to a corporation's philanthropic side doesn't seem to make much sense on the surface, companies respond to altruism just as much as individuals do. "To understand why corporations engage in philanthropy and to know whether they should, one must return to first principles and explain why anyone engages in philanthropy. The answer is altruism: People feel good when others' lives are improved...The reason offered is that philanthropy buys goodwill from consumers, employees, and regulators" (Henderson).

David Sterling and Mark Randall stated "the nature of graphic design often leads a designer to fulfill the role of social commentator rather than a true activist. The operative word is act" (Heller). Although most of the experts and suppliers who are involved with Prodigy are not designers, the sentiment is similar. Those in this group are responding to a different need than those who donate money. Although monetary donations are necessary, Prodigy needs other resources as well. Some of these things, such as classrooms or access to production facilities, can only come from outside sources. In this way, companies can listen to the needs of the organization and respond accordingly, as opposed to just throwing money at them.

EXPERTS & SUPPLIERS - GET SOMETHING

In the Citizen Designer, Judith Schwartz believes that companies cannot truly be altruistic—"it is ultimately about the bottom line, not trying to raise consciousness or benefit society. In business no matter how emotionally involved a particular cause a company might appear to be or how loudly it preaches about values, in the end the bottom line is profit and self interest." If this is the case, Prodigy needs to appeal to the business side of a company and be as marketable as possible. Most companies hesitate to give away their products and skills away for free, so letting them know that Prodigy will give them something in return is likely to make them much more accommodating. Being associated with a 'good cause' is a way for companies to gain positive exposure—"marketing social responsibility plays to people's emotions and hearts" (Schwartz). Research has shown that "two-thirds of American consumers report that they would be likely to switch brands or retailers to one associated with a good cause" (Schwartz).

Similarly to those who donate money, experts and suppliers can benefit from tax write-offs as well. Donations of products and property can be tax deductible. "Donations are evaluated and deducted based on their fair market value (basically what a consumer would pay for these goods in an open market)" (Beesley).

SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE

MENTORS & ADVISORS - LANGUAGE USED

We need your help to guide and encourage students. We want our mentors to help instill confidence and knowledge of the creation process in students. We also ask our mentors to serve on our advisory board and discuss and work with students on their ideas from the very beginning.

We appreciate every donation receive, but we understand that not everyone is able to support us this way. Mentoring and serving on the advisory board is a great way to get involved with Prodigy. You will be helping students from the minute they walk through the door up until they complete their project.

Being a mentor does not only benefit the mentee! Mentors will get recognition along with their student for successfully completed projects. Mentoring is also a great way to develop leadership skills and explore new ways of solving problems.

We are grateful for your support and thank you for considering to donate your time to us.

WHY?

The mentors of the company are made up of individuals from the community. They are the ones to teach, guide, and encourage students on a one-on-one basis and they also are members of the advisory board. They create a positive working experience for the student. Mentors would donate their time weekly and also utilize their connections within their field.

MENTORS & ADVISORS - GIVE SOMETHING

There are many people who want to support nonprofits and charities, but can't or don't necessarily want to donate money. Donating time by volunteering is just as valuable and allows people to help out without spending money.

Most people who choose to be mentors do so because it makes them feel good. Successful mentor-mentee relationships involve the mentor guiding and supporting their mentee as they learn and grow (Keller). Mentors often gain personal satisfaction from seeing their mentee succeed. A culmination of studies done on mentoring found that "mentoring has the potential to improve job satisfaction, raise confidence levels, increase retention rates, and facilitate learning through role modeling, guidance, and experience (Mijares). Mentoring does not always offer much in the way of compensation for the mentor, which means most mentors are volunteering their time solely to encourage the growth and education of others.

MENTORS & ADVISORS - GET SOMETHING

"Mentoring has been recognized as a critical component in leadership development" (Johnston), and because of this, mentoring can be a great asset to someone's resume. Job recruiters look for applicants who are highly interpersonal (Chen), and being a successful mentor can teach one how to better relate and connect to another person. Mentoring also allows for the opportunity to "review knowledge, stay current with... clinical skills and seek resources to answer questions" (Mijares). Having a mentor relationship can give a mentor a new perspective on their field and allow them to explore different techniques and new technologies.

Similarly to the other two groups, volunteering can be tax deductible. While mentors can't actually "deduct the value of [their] service, [they] can deduct certain expenses incurred and related to [their] volunteer work" (Beesley). Providing supplies or hosting an event for a mentee would fall under that category. Although tax deductions are not the first reason most people volunteer as mentors, they are still important to include.

ORGANIZATION

THIS IS HOW IT COMES TOGETHER

ORGANIZATION

HOW THE COMPANY WORKS

Prodigy relies on a large team of people to keep the organization running smoothly. Besides a small full-time staff, there are three different groups of people who make up the company: investors and donators, experts and suppliers, and mentors and advisors. Each group has been explained in more detail above.

WHY?

It would be nearly impossible to run an organization like Prodigy with only a few staff members and no interaction from the community. Getting individuals and other companies involved allows for a wider range of opportunities. Companies that Prodigy partners with, for example, can give students and mentors access to their production facilities, something that would not be feasible for Prodigy if it was just a company by itself. Each mentor and workshop teacher has a wide variety of knowledge, connections, and skills in their field. Attempting to train employees to this degree would take a considerable amount of time, not to mention the fact that they would not have would have little to no professional experience in the field.

THE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

Students are introduced to Prodigy mainly by means of ads or by word-of-mouth. If their interest is piqued, the application process is simple. They can either walk into our building and fill out a short form that tells us a little bit about themselves and their ideas, or go online and fill out the same application, if an in-person visit is not a possibility. They don't necessarily need a prototype or a completely thought out plan, just a vision and dedication.

After they submit their idea, someone on the Prodigy staff reaches out to the student, so that the student can choose a time and date for a 'formal' presentation of their project to the advisory board. It is possible for students to pitch their idea the same day they submit it, but depending on the amount of students that show up, this is not always possible. We want to give each student an equal amount of time and respect.

Students step into our pitch room and tell us what they're working on. Our 'pitch room' is relaxed and welcoming. We aren't sharks! Prodigy was created to cultivate a positive experience for young people, and we don't want them to walk away feeling stressed or discouraged.

The advisory board listens to the student's pitch, ask them questions, and discusses with the student the possible steps needed to be taken to achieve their goal. The student doesn't necessarily need to have thought about all of this beforehand (although it might move the process along more quickly)—the point of this presentation and discussion is to allow the student to be part of a brainstorming session where no idea is too outlandish. The advisory board is made up of full-time Prodigy employees as well as mentors and certain members of the community, so the discussion can be pulled in many directions and be seen from different angles.

THE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS CONT.

There are several different categories or fields that students can choose to identify with, (i.e., film, product design, business/organization, etc.) and we want to make sure that all of these interests are represented at all times. Each member of Prodigy selects a field (or two, or three!) in which they are knowledgeable when they become a part of Prodigy. During the initial presentation and discussion with the student, members of several different fields are present, even if they are not directly related to the field the student is interested in.

If it fits into our guidelines, the student will get paired with a mentor. All mentors have experience and connections within their chosen field, which ensures students receive relevant, helpful advice and are able to more efficiently complete their project. It is possible for one mentor to have more than one mentee—but no more than five. Small groups of mentees can meet with their mentor at the same time to broaden their own scope and exchange ideas and methodologies.

Students also meet one-on-one with their mentors so they can create a timeline and set their project goals. Students and mentors meet regularly, usually on a weekly basis. This is not only so mentors can guide their mentee through their project, but also so the student and mentor can form a lasting relationship

Mentors guide the student through the production process relevant to their project and allow the student to take the lead as often as possible. This might include making phone calls to suppliers, approaching professionals and asking them to be involved, or creating a working prototype. There is no hard and fast timeline for when projects must be completed. The teenagers Prodigy works with do not always have much time to themselves, which the student's mentor and others working with them must take into account.

THE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS CONT.

During their time with Prodigy, students must also attend financial literacy classes. Most, if not all, projects have to deal with money in some fashion, whether that is through paying for production materials, paying employees, or understanding insurance. Financial knowledge and responsibility is crucial not only for a Prodigy student's project, but also for their future financial security.

At the end of the process, students will walk away with real life professional and production experience, as well as connections and a network in a specific field. By allowing students to do most of the work themselves, the knowledge they gain will stick. Not only that, but we hope to show young adults that they are capable of creating and completing a large scale project themselves.

THE PROCESS FOR STUDENTS - WHY?

Prodigy's process aims to be as simple and straight forward as possible. The organization's main focus is to encourage students and give them confidence, not have them jump through hoops. Projects are meant to be challenging, so having the 'screening' process be as streamlined as possible is important—getting the project approved should not be more difficult than the project itself. Prodigy's focus is on education, not competition or profit. We want to treat all of the students as equals and give them the time and respect they deserve.

ORGANIZATION

ADDITIONAL CLASSES

Financial literacy classes will be held weekly. Some of these classes might only meet once, while others would be conducted over several weeks. All Prodigy students will be required to attend a few of these classes in addition to their apprenticeship, to enhance their working experience. The classes will also be advertised to the public. The instructors would be comprised of both Prodigy staff and various volunteers from partnering companies.

WHY?

Additional classes allow for additional education. Although Prodigy students will attend classes, these financial responsibility courses are especially aimed at the community as a whole because it “is amongst the most imperative competenc[y] required to survive in today’s economy” (Williams). Having even the most basic financial knowledge makes it much easier to navigate the economic world.

As stated above in the process for students, almost all Prodigy projects deal with finances and money in some way. Having all students attend these classes is a great way to bridge the gap when it comes to money, as not all mentors are required to be financial experts. Inviting members of the community to these classes also broadens the students’ network—they are able to meet adults who have the initiative to better themselves, and having a wider range of ages in the classroom will multiply the amount of perspectives around money.

Having a more financially responsible community means a greater chance for upward mobility. Families and other members of the community can begin to learn better spending and saving habits, and pass those along to their children and friends. These classes might not make them millionaires, but even small changes can improve one’s financial future.

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

WHAT THEY'RE DOING

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS OVERVIEW

Prodigy is not a completely original organization—venture capital firms exist to fund people’s ideas, although their end game is to make a profit. Hit TV show Shark Tank allows people of all ages to pitch their ideas to a panel of investors, and if one of the panelists likes their idea, they will make an offer to the contestant. Complete funding is uncommon, however, and the atmosphere of the show is usually anxiety inducing. Kickstarter, on the other hand, is slightly less stressful. Hopeful innovators post their ideas online and let the community decide if their pitch is worthwhile or not. There are definitely similarities between these two organizations and Prodigy, but Prodigy has its own unique features that set it apart.

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

SHARK TANK

“Shark Tank is designed to make for good television” (Deeb). Although Shark Tank is based on the realities of venture capital, “it should not be your guide on what the normal venture capital fund raising process looks like or where typical valuations end up” (Deeb). Because the show is focused on audience viewership, they try to make every second as exciting (or nerve-wracking) as possible. Although the money contestants may be offered sounds great initially, they are rushed into a decision, and “in most cases, it is best not to accept [panelists’] offers, as you most likely can find a better deal elsewhere” (Deeb).

Promotional value is a benefit to consider when comparing Prodigy and Shark Tank. Shark Tank is viewed by millions around the country, so even if the contestant does not get an offer, many people have still seen the contestant’s pitch. Although Prodigy tries to fund as many students as possible, students don’t usually get recognized until after their project is complete, and projects that are not approved are only heard by the advisory board, as opposed to millions of people around North America.

Although Prodigy and Shark Tank might sound similar at first (they are both two organizations who fund innovators), Prodigy’s goal is education and creativity, not making exciting television. Every decision during the production process can be made carefully by the student because there isn’t any sort of time limit, and the student’s mentor is there to guide and teach them, as opposed to hurrying them along as quickly as possible.

SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

KICKSTARTER

Kickstarter is slightly more similar to Prodigy than Shark Tank. The basic idea is to support as many people as possible. “Kickstarter is a platform and a resource; we’re not involved in the development of the projects themselves. Anyone can launch a project on Kickstarter as long as it meets our guidelines” (What is Kickstarter?). Since Kickstarter began, 52,592 projects have been successfully funded, which is 44% of all projects that have been posted on the site (Kickstarter Stats).

Kickstarter is a great resource, but it does have a few drawbacks. Creators are 100% responsible for the completion of their project. This is great if a creator has access to supplies relating to their project and the space to create the product, but not everyone has those resources or the knowhow. Similarly to Shark Tank, innovators on Kickstarter are expected to have something to show when they initially pitch their ideas. They can get feedback from their backers or people interested in their product, but generally, not many people in the field can weigh in and give constructive criticism. Almost all communications are online, and creators interact with their audience through posts and the occasional video.

Where Kickstarter is a springboard, Prodigy is partnership. Prodigy emphasizes personal interactions and discussions, as opposed to communication via email or online. Prodigy helps innovators who are at various stages of the creation process, not just those who have constructed prototypes or experience in production. Our program is educational and more aimed at those who have limited resources and professional knowledge.

DELIVERABLES

THIS IS HOW IT TURNED OUT

DELIVERABLES

DELIVERABLE OVERVIEW

There were several deliverables for this project in order to appeal to several different audiences. The website has the most broad appeal, and is accessible to all potential and current members of Prodigy, including the students. Print advertisements and merchandise were created to engage the teenage audience and give them information. A 'care package' or 'stoke piece' will be sent to potential investors, suppliers, experts, and mentors and contains an infographic describing the organization through visuals as well as a small booklet that will go more in-depth. It also comes with a canvas bag that has light bulbs printed on it.

DELIVERABLES

WEBSITE



WEBSITE



WEBSITE - WHY?

The Prodigy website is a portal for all current and potential members of Prodigy. It highlights the teenagers in the program, as well as the donors, suppliers, and mentors. The site is simple and easy to navigate, and features in-action photos of current Prodigy participants and their mentors. This gives first time visitors to the site a glimpse at what Prodigy is about before they read any actual information.

The student side of the website provides a detailed run-down of what the Prodigy process is like for participating students, so they can have a better idea of what they're getting in to. This part of the site also holds the 'Innovator Form', which is the short form teenagers interested in Prodigy fill out before their presentation in front of the advisory board (it includes basic fields such as the person's name and the best way to reach them, and also asks them to give a brief description of their project or idea and the field or category it fits in to). Also available on the site are the projects of past participants, and the status of current Prodigy students, so potential students can see even more clearly what going through the Prodigy program is like.

Investors and donors, experts and suppliers, and mentors and advisors each have their own sections of the site, but the function of each of them is similar. The language used in each is different, but they all contain detailed information about how Prodigy runs on the student side, and what is needed to keep the program running. The investor side talks more about monetary donations, the experts and suppliers' talks about products, spaces, and skills needed, and the mentors and advisors side focuses on needing capable adults with exemplary mentor skills. From each of these parts of the site, a visitor can easily get to the same presentation of Prodigy student projects as mentioned above, so supporters can see exactly where their time, money, and resources are going, and how much it benefits the community.

DELIVERABLES

ADVERTISEMENTS



DELIVERABLES

ADVERTISEMENTS



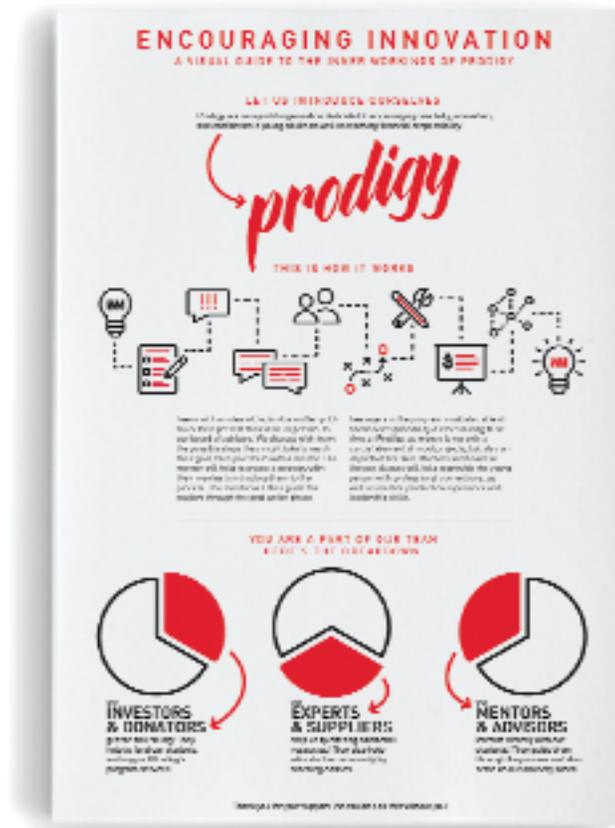
ADVERTISEMENTS - WHY?

Bold, brightly colored ads were created to appeal to potential Prodigy students. Like the website, these ads feature shots of current Prodigy students working in the field with their mentors. As the saying goes, 'a picture is worth a thousand words', and because the ads don't feature much text otherwise, a photo background is a great way to show what Prodigy is all about without going in to a long description.

The two ads that do feature words keep it simple. The words themselves are the focus of the ads, and they are short, sweet, and bold. Prodigy's bright red and the contrast of the white text will easily grab attention, and because there isn't much to read, teenagers' attention will be held. Prodigy wants young people to be involved in the program, and a great way to do that is to make them stop in their tracks and pay attention.

The third ad has almost no text besides the Prodigy contact information at the bottom. This one appeals to those who are more visual, as well as those who are more curious. The ad has one lightbulb printed more clearly, and in a different shape, than all the others, which to most indicates uniqueness and, because they are lightbulbs, intelligence. But because there is no text other than the website, the curious must learn more about the program to figure out the advertisement completely.

CARE PACKAGE - INFOGRAPHIC



DELIVERABLES

CARE PACKAGE - INFORMATIONAL BOOKLET



CARE PACKAGE - INFORMATIONAL BOOKLET - SELECT SPREADS



DELIVERABLES

CARE PACKAGE - CANVAS TOTE BAG



CARE PACKAGE - WHY?

Reaching out personally to various companies and individuals piques these potential supporters' interest, especially if they have not heard of Prodigy previously.

An infographic is a great, easy way to give information to people. Although some infographics contain a lot of facts and statistics, the one I included in the Prodigy 'stoke piece' is a basic overview of how the company works and what it's about. The infographic also has a fun, bold feel to it to reflect Prodigy's own bold branding. An 'informational booklet' is also included in the care package. The booklet gives more of an in-depth look at Prodigy, for those who want to know more. The booklet has a bold design as well, but is slightly more serious than the infographic is. The biggest challenge Prodigy faces is being taken seriously by the professionals and investors the company relies on to be successful. Because of this, the informational booklet has a more formal design than the infographic does.

Prodigy's audience includes many different kinds of people, and every one of them has a different way of learning and understanding information. For this reason, Prodigy offers two different ways to learn about the company. Those who respond better to images will likely find the infographic most helpful. People who respond better to written words will get more information out of the booklet.

WHY? CONT.

The care package Prodigy sends also includes a printed canvas bag. It is decorated with the light bulb iconography that is consistent throughout Prodigy's branding. Graphic elements were used because they can create a variety of bold patterns (for use in future promotional items) that will spark an interest in passersby.

The bag was included primarily as an extra gift for the recipient, however, I discovered even more reason to include it during the research phase. A study was done on the effects of including an element of touch when asking people to donate to a cause. Subjects were given a pamphlet of information on an organization that donated blankets to the needy, and they included a swatch of fleece fabric similar to the fabric the blankets were made out of (Peck). The study found that "people who [were] high in autotelic [need for touch], in particular, [were] likely to be more susceptible to the increase in persuasion that comes from a pleasant touch experience" (Peck). Those who were low in autotelic need for touch did not experience this effect, but they were not turned off by it either. The tote bag was included because it allows the individual who receives the package to make more of a connection with Prodigy.

DELIVERABLES

STUDENT MERCHANDISE



STUDENT MERCHANDISE - WHY?

The focus of this project is centered around the professionals and companies that Prodigy works with, but I wanted to explore some design elements that might be used for the young adults Prodigy works with. Because these designs would be marketed specifically towards students, the t-shirt lettering is more trendy and rougher than the rest of Prodigy's branding. Typographic cues were taken from graffiti and brush pen lettering.

'Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained' was chosen as the tagline when marketing to young adults. It targets them directly and encourages them to act and take chances. 'Encouraging Innovation' is the professional tagline. It speaks more to the mission of the company, whereas 'Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained' is speaking directly to the students. This difference of language is important because Prodigy is a space specifically for young adults to voice their ideas—the focus is on them, so the language is more direct.

CONSEQUENCES

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

CONSEQUENCES

FORSEEN - POSITIVE

Students and members of the community will come away with better public speaking skills, they will be more financially literate and more confident about their individual abilities. Students who go through the program will come away with real life production experience, as well as a large-scale, completed project.

FORSEEN - NEGATIVE

The more skills people learn, the more connections they make, and the more their confidence in their abilities grow, the more people may become overqualified for jobs. This could be a problem in an area where there are only so few jobs are available in the first place—employers might not hire someone for a job because an overqualified employee is more likely to want to get paid more, as well as want to move up in the field.

CONSEQUENCES

UNFORSEEN - POSITIVE

Those who are confident about their abilities and able to sell themselves and their ideas well are more likely to get hired (Chen). People who are knowledgeable about finances also tend to be much better candidates for upper management jobs (as well as jobs in general). This means that Prodigy could offer a wider range of opportunities for those who are or were economically disadvantaged. Getting a well-paying job without needing a college degree, for example, or being able to successfully pay off all debts and loans.

UNFORSEEN - NEGATIVE

If high school age students become confident in their abilities and have an understanding of how the professional world works, they will feel going to college is unnecessary. Prodigy gives them real world experience before they graduate, allowing them to possibly get a job straight out of high school. If there are enough participants of this program who choose to forgo college, college attendance will go down drastically. This may raise the cost of college tuition, as well as decrease the amount of jobs available for higher level educators.

RESEARCH

WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU

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